

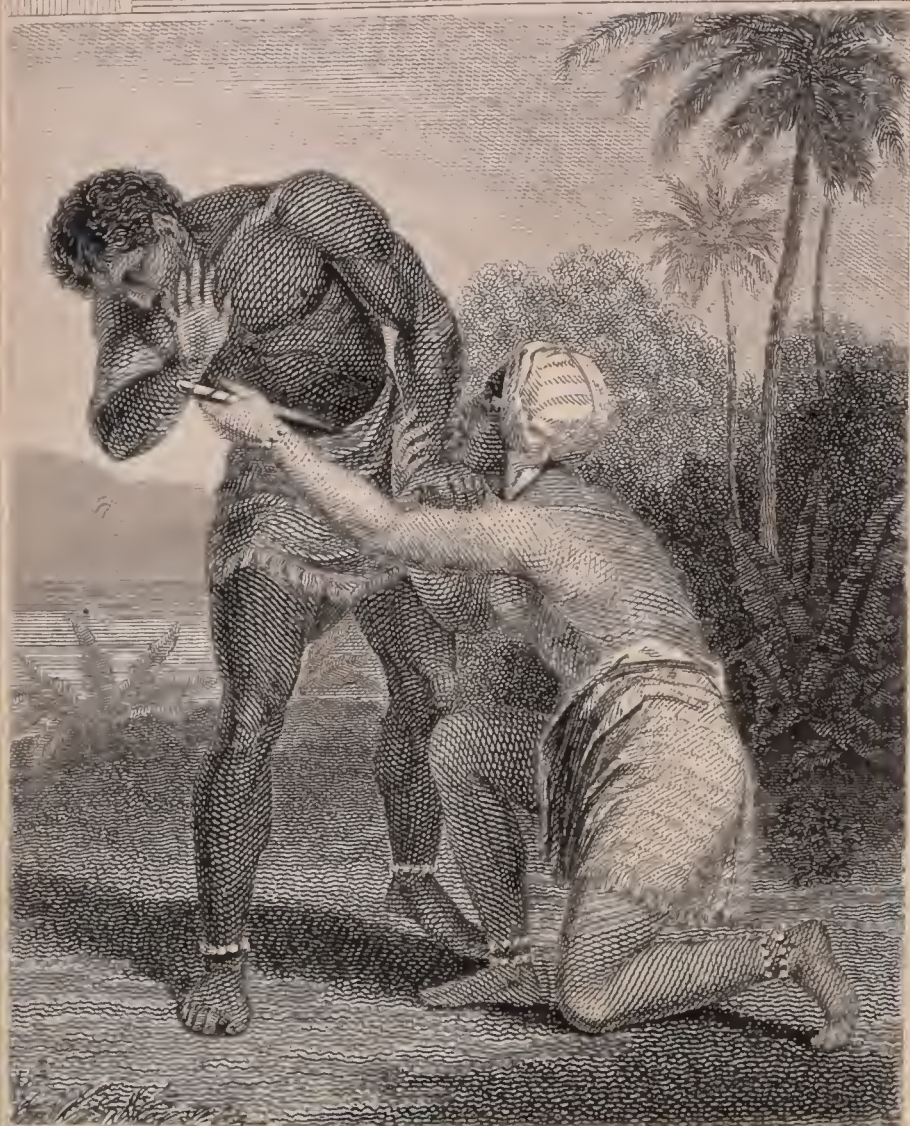
O.

181





# ORONOKO.



ORONOKO. THE NEGRO. WITH INTERLUDES.  
ACT V.

SCENE IV.

Painted by Howard.

Pub. by Longman & Co 1836.

Engraved by C Heath.

# ORONOKO;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY THOMAS SOUTHERN.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

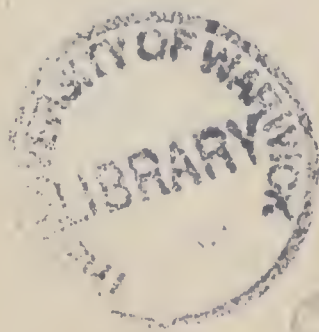
---

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF  
WARWICK  
LIBRARY

*The Gift of*  
*Mrs G. F. Hall*



00245569



## REMARKS.

---

THE valuable half of this drama, which is the tragic part, is founded neither upon fictitious characters nor events. Such an African prince, as Oroonoko, stolen from his native kingdom of Angola, was actually brought to an English settlement in the West Indies, and sold for a slave.

This pitiable occurrence took place in the reign of Charles II. at the time that Mrs. Behn, the well-known dramatic writer, whom Pope has honoured by a satire, resided at Surinam with her family; her father having been appointed lieutenant general of the settlement, and of thirty neighbouring islands.

It was at Surinam, that Mrs. Behn, not only saw, but became intimately acquainted with the unfortunate, but still proud and dignified, Oroonoko. She was witness to his bravery and skill in arms, upon the occasion of some danger threatening the island: and she beheld his humility and moderation, when all his martial feats were performed, and tranquillity restored. She knew his Imoinda, and saw with delight their rapturous affection for each other.

On the return of Mrs. Behn to England, she published the memoirs of those ill-fated lovers; from which publication, Southern has selected materials for this pathetic tragedy

Whether the comic characters are taken from persons in real life, or from the poet's fancy, is not known : nor is it of much consequence from whence they came, as they can do no great degree of honour to their birth-place.

The repulsive qualities of some of those characters, joined to the little which has been allotted for the heroine to perform, have been obstacles to the attraction of this drama, and it is seldom acted. Yet, some years past, Mr. Pope, in his very first appearance upon any stage, encountered, and triumphantly overcame, all impediments to the favourable reception of *Oroonoko*; and made the play so impressive, by his talents in the representation of that character, that for many nights it drew to the theatre a crowded audience. His acting was remarkably fine in the last scene; whilst his youth, person, deportment, and even features, gave an accurate portraiture of one of Africa's princely sons.

But could the ancient Roscius ascend from his grave to personate the hero of this piece, there is a great mercantile town in England, whose opulent inhabitants would not permit the play to appear in their magnificent theatre. The tragedy of "*Oroonoko*" is never acted in Liverpool, for the very reason why it ought to be acted there oftener than at any other place—The merchants of that great city acquire their riches by the slave trade.

If any defect can be attributed to Southern in the



tragic fabie, eitner of this play or of "Isabella," it is, that in the one, his first male character wants importance, and in the other, his principal female. Still, in both plays, he makes his tale, a tale of wo, though only a single personage becomes the object of deep concern.

That the poet Gray was an admirer of this tragedy, is seen in a letter of his to Horace Walpole, dated, Burnham in Buckinghamshire, 1737; wherein he says, "We have old Mr. Southern, at a gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us. He is now seventy years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as agreeable an old man as can be; at least, I persuade myself so, when I look at him, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko."\*

Southern is an exception from most poets, in having been wealthy; but he procured some of his wealth by a means, which all poets should rather submit to poverty than employ: he printed tickets on his benefit nights as an author, and even urged their sale among his noble and distinguished friends. Thus, vilely reducing himself to dependence, in order to become rich; in lieu of honourably seeking riches, that he might become independent.

\* See Mason's Life of Gray

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OROONOKO	<i>Master Betty.</i>
ABOAN	<i>Mr. C. Kemble</i>
GOVERNOR	<i>Mr. Murray.</i>
BLANDFORD	<i>Mr. Brunton.</i>
STANMORE	<i>Mr. Claremont.</i>
CAPTAIN DRIVER	<i>Mr. Emery.</i>
HOTMAN	<i>Mr. Creswell.</i>

### PLANTERS.

*Messrs. Atkins—Beverly—Davenport—Field—Harley  
—King—Klanert—Lee—Menage.*

IMOINDA	<i>Miss Smith.</i>
WIDOW	<i>Mrs. Emery.</i>

### SLAVES.

*Messrs. Abbot—T. Blanchard—Bologna—Goodwin—  
Jefferies—Lewiss—Powers—Sarjant—Treby—  
Truman—Wilde.*

*Mesdames—Bologna—Bologna—Cox—Dibdin—  
Follet, and Ratchford.*

*SCENE—Surinam.*

# ORONOKO.

---

## ACT THE FIRST.

### SCENE I.

*View of the Sea.*

*Enter several PLANTERS.*

1 *Plan.* Well, neighbours, Captain Driver has brought us a fresh supply—more slaves.

2 *Plan.* Ay, and I'm sure we had never more need of 'em.

3 *Plan.* That's true, indeed, and I'm afraid we shall never have less.

4 *Plan.* Yes, yes; we shall have enough of 'em, I warrant you, when they come to breed.

3 *Plan.* Breed! it's a sign you're a new comer; plague on 'em, a parcel of lazy, obstinate, untractable pagans;—half of 'em are so sulky, when they first come, that they won't eat their victuals when it's set before 'em, and a christian may beat 'em til he drops down, before he can make 'em eat, if they han't a mind to it.

2 *Plan.* Beat ! aye, faith, he may beat those that will eat, long enough before they will work : and, what with their starving themselves, and what with the discipline they require, before they will put out their strength, they die as fast as rotten sheep, plague on 'em ! The poor industrious planter loses the money they cost him, and his ground runs to ruin for want of their labour.

1 *Plan.* Ay, in truth, a christian colony has a hard time of it, that is forc'd to deal in this cursed heathen commodity : here every time a ship comes in, my money goes for a great raw-boned negro fellow, that has the impudence to think he is my fellow-creature, with as much right to liberty as I have, and so grows sullen and refuses to work ; or, for a young wench, who will howl night and day after a brat or a lover, forsooth.

4 *Plan.* Nay, as far as I see yet, the women are worse than the men ; but 'Squire Blandford has got one that they say is not of their complexion.

3 *Plan.* So they say ; but she's of the breed, I'll warrant her—she's one of the sulky ones—the Lieutenant Governor has taken a fancy to her ; and yet, wou'd you believe it, she gives herself airs, and will scarce speak to him.

2 *Plan.* I've heard of her ; they call her Clemene.

4 *Plan.* 'Tis a wonder, however, that his honour don't buy her.

3 *Plan.* She was in a lot that Mr. Blandford drew for the Lord Governor himself, who you know is expected by the next ship from England, and she cannot be sold without his consent.

4 *Plan.* In a lot drawn for the Lord Governor ?—I don't yet perfectly understand this method of drawing lots.

1 *Plan.* No ! why nothing is so easy ; the colony agrees with the buccaneer to bring a certain number of slaves, at so much a head ; and when they come

in, we draw for them to prevent disputes; for, as they're all of a price, every one, you know, wou'd be for picking out the best—come along with us to the market, and you'll see how it is presently; the slaves are now coming on shore. *[Exeunt*

## SCENE II.

*An open Place.*

*Enter* LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, BLANDFORD, and STANMORE.

*Gov.* There's no resisting your fortune, Blandford; you draw all the prizes.

*Bland.* I draw for our Lord Governor, you know; his fortune favours me.

*Gov.* I grudge him nothing this time; but if fortune had favour'd me in the last sale, the fair slave had been mine; Clemene had been mine.

*Blan.* Are you still in love with her?

*Gov.* Every day more in love with her.

*Enter* CAPTAIN DRIVER, *tedzed and pulled about by several* PLANTERS, MEN and WOMEN.

*Wom.* Here have I six slaves in my lot, and not a man among them; all women and children; what can I do with 'em, Captain? pray consider I am a woman myself.

1 *Plan.* I have all men in mine. pray, Captain, let the men and women be mingled together, for the good of the plantation.

2 *Plan.* Ay, ay, a man and a woman, Captain, for the good of the plantation.



*Capt.* Let them mingle together, and be damn'd, what care I? would you have me pimp for the good of the plantation?

1 *Plan.* I am a constant customer, Captain

*Wom.* I am always ready money to you, Captain.

1 *Plan.* For that matter, mistress, my money is as ready as yours.

*Wom.* Pray hear me, Captain.

*Capt.* Look you, I have done my part by you; I have brought the number of slaves you bargain'd for; if your lots have not pleas'd you, you must draw again among yourselves.

3 *Plan.* I am contented with my lot.

4 *Plan.* I am very well satisfied.

3 *Plan.* We'll have no drawing again.

*Capt.* Do you hear, mistress? you may hold your tongue: for my part I expect my money.

*Wom.* Captain, nobody questions or scruples the payment: but I won't hold my tongue; 'tis too much to pray and pay too: one may speak for one's own, I hope.

*Capt.* Well, what would you say?

*Wom.* I say no more than I can make out.

*Capt.* Out with it then.

*Wom.* I say, things have not been so fair carried as they might have been. How do I know but you have juggled together in my absence? You drew the lots before I came, I'm sure.

*Capt.* That's your own fault, mistress; you might have come sooner.

*Wom.* Then here's a prince, as they say, among the slaves, and you set him down to go as a common man.

*Capt.* Why, what should make him worth more than a common man? He'll not do the more work for being a prince, will he?

*Gov.* Where are the slaves, Captain; they are long coming.



*Blan.* And who is this prince that's fallen to my lot for the Lord Governor? Let me know something of him, that I may treat him accordingly? Who is he?

*Capt.* He's the devil of a fellow, I can tell you? A prince every inch of him: you have paid dear enough for him, for all the good he'll do you. I was forc'd to clap him in irons, and did not think the ship safe neither. You are in hostility with the Indians; they say, they threaten you daily: you had best have an eye upon him.

*Blan.* But who is he?

*Gov.* And how do you know him to be a prince?

*Capt.* He is son and heir to the great King of Angola, a mischievous monarch in those parts, who by his good will, would never let any of his neighbours be in quiet. This son was his general; a plaguy fighting fellow. I have formerly had dealings with him for slaves, which he took prisoners and have got pretty roundly by him. But the war being at an end, and nothing more to be got by the trade of that country, I made bold to bring the prince along with me.

*Gov.* How could you do that?

*Blan.* What! steal a prince out of his own country! impossible.

*Capt.* 'Twas hard indeed; but I did it. You must know this Oroonoko——

*Blan.* Is that his name?

*Capt.* Ay, Oroonoko.

*Gov.* Oroonoko.

*Capt.* Is naturally inquisitive about the men and manners of the white nations. Because I could give him some account of the other parts of the world, I grew very much into his favour: in return of so great an honour, you know I could do no less, upon my coming away, than invite him on board me: never

having been in a ship, he appointed his time, and I prepared my entertainment; he came the next evening, as private as he could, with about some twenty along with him. The punch went round; and as many of his attendants as would be dangerous, I sent dead drunk on shore; the rest we secured; and so you have the Prince Oroonoko.

1 *Plan*. Gad a mercy, Captain; there you were with him, i'faith.

2 *Plan*. Such men as you are fit to be employed in public affairs. The plantation will thrive by you.

3 *Plan*. Industry ought to be encouraged.

*Capt*. There's nothing done without it, boys. I have made my fortune this way.

*Blan*. Unheard of villany!

*Stan*. Barbarous treachery!

*Blan*. They applaud him for't.

*Gov*. But, Captain, methinks you have taken a great deal of pains for this Prince Oroonoko; why did you part with him at the common rate of slaves?

*Capt*. Why, Lieutenant Governor, I'll tell you; I did design to carry him to England, to have show'd him there; but I found him troublesome upon my hands, and I'm glad I'm rid of him—Oh, oh, hark, they come!

*Enter BLACK SLAVES, in chams, MEN, WOMEN, and CHILDREN, ABOAN, and others of OROONOKO's attendants, OROONOKO last of all, in chains.*

*Capt*. Now, Governor, pray observe him.

*Oro*. So, sir, you have kept your word with me.

*Capt*. I am a better christian, I thank you, than to keep it with a heathen.

*Oro*. You are a christian, be a christian still:  
If you have any god that teaches you  
To break your word, I need not curse you more:

Let him cheat you, as you are false to me.  
You faithful followers of my better fortune,  
We have been fellow-soldiers in the field ;

[*Embracing his friend.*]

Now we are fellow-slaves. This last farewell.  
Be sure of one thing that will comfort us,  
Whatever world we are next thrown upon  
Cannot be worse than this.

[*All SLAVES go off but OROONOKO.*]

*Capt.* You see what a bloody pagan he is, Governor ; but I took care that none of his followers should be in the same lot with him, for fear they should undertake some desperate action, to the danger of the colony.

*Oro.* Live still in fear ; it is the villain's curse,  
And will revenge my chains. Fear even me,  
Who have no power to hurt thee. Nature abhors,  
And drives thee out from the society  
And commerce of mankind, for breach of faith.  
Men live and prosper but in mutual trust,  
A confidence of one another's truth :  
That thou hast violated. I have done ;  
I know my fortune, and submit to it.

*Gov.* Sir, I am sorry for your fortune, and would help it if I could.

*Blan.* Take off his chains. You know your condition ; but you are fallen into honourable hands. You are the Lord Governor's slave, who will use you nobly : in his absence it shall be my care to serve you.

[*BLANDFORD applying to him.*]

*Oro.* I hear you, but I can believe no more.

*Gov.* Captain, I'm afraid the world won't speak so honourably of this action of yours, as you would have 'em.

*Capt.* I have the money, let the world speak and be damn'd ; I care not.

*Oro* I would forget myself. Be satisfied.

[*To BLANDFORD*]

I am above the rank of common slaves.  
Let that content you. The christian there, that  
knows me,  
For his own sake will not discover more.

*Capt.* I have other matters to mind. You have  
him, and much good may do you with your prince.  
[*Exit.*

[*The PLANTERS pulling and staring at OROONOKO.*

*Blan.* What would you have here? You stare as  
if you never saw a man before. Stand farther off.  
[*Turns them away.*

*Oro.* Let them stare on ;  
I am unfortunate, but not ashamed  
Of being so : no, let the guilty blush,  
The white man that betray'd me : honest black  
Disdains to change its colour. I am ready ;  
Where must I go ? Dispose me as you please,  
I am not well acquainted with my fortune.  
But must learn to know it better : so I know, you  
say,  
Degrees make all things easy.

*Blan.* All things shall be easy.

*Oro.* Tear off this pomp, and let me know myself :  
The slavish habit best becomes me now.  
Hard fare and whips, and chains may overpow'r  
The frailer flesh, and bow my body down :  
But there's another, nobler part of me,  
Out of your reach, which you can never tame.

*Blan.* You shall find nothing of this wretchedness  
You apprehend. We are not monsters all.  
You seem unwilling to disclose yourself :  
Therefore for fear the mentioning your name  
Should give you new disquiets, I presume  
To call you Cæsar.

*Oro.* I am myself ; but call me what you please.

*Gon.* A very good name, Cæsar,  
And very fit for his character.

*Oro.* Was Cæsar then a slave ?



Gov. I think he was ; to pirates too : he was a  
great  
Conqueror, but unfortunate in his friends——  
Oro. His friends were christians ?  
Blan. No.  
Oro. No ! that's strange !  
Gov. And murder'd by them.  
Oro. I would be Cæsar then. Yet I will live.  
Blan. Live to be happier.  
Oro. Do what you will with me.  
Blan. I will wait upon you, attend, and serve  
you. [Exeunt.

## SCENE III.

*A Grove—a Plantation seen at a little Distance.*

*Enter ABOAN.*

Abo. At length I am alone—but why alone ?  
My thoughts are worse society to me  
Than the poor slaves, with whom I'm doom'd to  
labour——  
I cannot bear it—if I turn my view  
Backward or forward, round me, or within,  
'Tis all regret, opposition, and despair.——  
Yet why despair !—something may yet be done ;—  
May yet be done—hold—let me most distrust  
The flatterer hope—if she one moment lures me.  
To patient suff'rance, from that fatal moment  
Insidious slumbers steal upon my virtue—  
I shall—distraction ! *must* grow tame by habit—  
I must—what else has quench'd in those around me  
That indignation which now choaks my utt'rance ?  
All hell is in the thought—my struggle must be now,

This instant, now—precipitation's wisdom—

[SLAVES *at a distance.*

*Slav.* Hoa! Hoa! Aboan, Aboan—

*Abo.* Hark! here they come—It must, it shall  
be so :

Hackney'd they are in mis'ries new to me,  
Like secret fire that smokeless embers hide.  
Yet still the love of liberty must live.

*Enter three SLAVES*

1 *Slav.* Here, where are you? come, to work, to  
work.

2 *Slav.* You are a stranger, ignorant of your duty;  
Or else this idleness had been chastis'd  
With many a smarting blow.

3 *Slav.* Ay, good Aboan,  
Come, come with us, for if the overseer  
Ev'n now surprise us——

2 *Slav.* Hush, I hear his voice ——

1 *Slav.* No, no, 'tis not he ——

*Abo.* Wou'd he scourge us then?

3 *Slav.* Wou'd he? Experience soon will tell you  
that.

*Abo.* Has then experience ever told it you?

3 *Slav.* Has it? don't ask me—wou'd I could say  
no?

*Abo.* You have been beaten then to patient drud-  
gery.

2 *Slav.* 'Tis shameful to confess it, yet 'tis true.

*Abo.* What to confess is shameful, is it not  
More shameful still to suffer?

3 *Slav.* What if it be?

*Abo.* Then suffer it no longer.

1 *Slav.* No longer—no, if we knew how to help it.

*Abo.* Knew how?—suppose a friend should tell  
you how?

[*They gather eagerly about him.*



2 *Slav.* What say you ?

1 *Slav.* Are there ways ?

3 *Slav.* Can you tell us ?

*Abo.* I see by this impatience you're not quell'd  
Into a torpid tame insensibility ;  
I'll tell you then such news as shall revive  
Each drooping virtue, string each nerve anew.

*All Slav.* What is it—what is it ?—

*Abo.* There is among you now a mighty prince,  
Before the lightning of whose dreaded sword,  
These pale, cold, half-formed tyrants that insult ye  
Wou'd vanish, like thin mists before the sun.

1 *Slav.* What, did he come with you ?

*Aboa.* He came with me,  
I am myself distinguish'd by his friendship,  
And oft with him have led the front of battle.

2 *Slav.* But how, where——

3 *Slav.* Is there only you and he ?

*Abo.* There are six more of high command about  
him,  
All try'd, all firm, all fit for great achievements.

1 *Slav.* Where are they ?

*Abo.* The prince, my lord not long since parted  
from me ;  
The rest, not now far off, will soon be found——  
When we were parted, he embraced us all ;  
My friends, says he, “ One thing will comfort us,  
Whatever world we are thrown next upon  
Cannot be worse than this”——  
These were my royal master's words at parting,  
And sure you cannot doubt but they are true.  
Shall we then, having nothing worse to fear,  
Bear with dull sluggish patience what we suffer !—  
If nothing's worse, the chance is all for gain :—  
There can be danger then in no attempt ;  
And if there was 'twere better still, for danger  
Has always its equivalent in glory.

[The SLAVES look on each other eagerly, silently asking each other what they think—after a pause.

1 Slav. And will this prince, and you, and these your friends

Assist us to be free?

Aboa. Will you with them

Join hands in the attempt?—

[A cry without, at some distance—the SLAVES start, and seem terrified.

What cry was that?

2 Slav. 'Tis the complaint of wretched slaves, extorted

By bloody whips laid on without remorse,  
And without cause—ere night perhaps from us,  
And you, such cry may by such stripes be forc'd

Aboa. Ye gods! and shall we not resist it then!

Slaves. We will—

Aboa. Your hands—at night we meet again.

Come on—now lead me to my task. [Exeunt.

## ACT THE SECOND.

### SCENE I.

*Enter OROONOKO and BLANDFORD.*

Oro. You know my story, and you say you are  
A friend to my misfortunes: that's a name  
Will teach you what you owe yourself and me.

*Blan.* I'll study to deserve to be your friend.  
When once our noble Governor arrives,  
With him you will not need my interest :  
He is too generous not to feel your wrongs.  
But be assur'd I will employ my pow'r,  
And find the means to send you home again.

*Oro.* I thank you, sir.—My honest wretched  
          friends ! [Sighing]  
Their chains are heavy : they have hardly found  
So kind a master. May I ask you, sir,  
What is become of them : perhaps I should not.  
You will forgive a stranger.

*Bland.* I'll inquire,  
And use my best endeavours, where they are,  
To have them gently us'd.

*Oro.* Once more I thank you.  
You offer every cordial that can keep  
My hopes alive, to wait a better day.  
What friendly care can do, you have apply'd.  
But, oh ! I have a grief admits no cure.

*Blan.* You do not know, sir——

*Oro.* Can you raise the dead ?  
Pursue and overtake the wings of time ?  
And bring about again the hours, the days,  
The years that made me happy ?

*Blan.* That is not to be done.

*Oro.* No, there is nothing to be done for me.

[Kneeling and kissing the earth.]

Thou god adored ! thou ever glorious sun !  
If she be yet on earth, send me a beam  
Of thy all-seeing pow'r to light me to her !  
Or if thy sister goddess has preferr'd  
Her beauty to the skies, to be a star ;  
O tell me where she shines, that I may stand  
Whole nights, and gaze upon her.

*Blan.* I am rude, and interrupt you.

*Oro.* I am troublesome :

But pray give me your pardon. My swoll'n heart  
Bursts out its passage, and I must complain.

O! can you think of nothing dearer to me?

Dearer than liberty, my country, friends,  
Much dearer than my life? That I have lost—  
The tend'rest, best belov'd, and loving wife.

*Bland.* Alas! I pity you.

*Oro.* Do pity me:

Pity's a-kin to love; and every thought  
Of that soft kind is welcome to my soul.

I would be pity'd here.

*Blan.* I dare not ask

More than you please to tell me: but, if you  
Think it convenient to let me know

Your story, I dare promise you to bear  
A part in your distress, if not assist you.

*Oro.* Thou honest-hearted man! I wanted such,  
Just such a friend as thou art, that would sit  
Still as the night, and let me talk whole days  
Of my Imoinda. O! I'll tell thee all  
From first to last; and pray observe me well.

*Bland.* I will most heedfully.

*Oro.* There was a stranger in my father's court,  
Valu'd and honour'd much: he was a white,  
The first I ever saw of your complexion:  
Of many virtues, and so fam'd in arms,  
He still commanded all my father's wars.  
I was bred under him. One fatal day.  
The armies joining, he before me stepp'd,  
Receiving in his breast a poison'd dart  
Levell'd at me; he dy'd within my arms.  
I've tir'd you already:

*Blan.* Pray go on.

*Oro.* He left an only daughter, whom he brought  
An infant to Angola. When I came  
Back to the court, a happy conqueror,  
Humanity oblig'd me to condole

With this sad virgin for her father's loss,  
Lost for my safety. I presented her  
With all the slaves of battle, to atone  
Her father's ghost. But when I saw her face,  
And heard her speak, I offer'd up myself  
To be the sacrifice. She bow'd and blush'd ;  
I wonder'd and ador'd. The sacred pow'r,  
That had subdu'd me, then inspir'd my tongue,  
Inclin'd her heart, and all our talk was love.

*Blan.* Then you were happy.

*Oro.* O ! I was too happy.

I marry'd her : and tho' my country's custom  
Indulg'd the privilege of many wives,  
I swore myself never to know but her.  
She grew with child, and I grew happier still.  
O my Imoinda ! But it could not last.  
Her fatal beauty reach'd my father's ears :  
He sent for her to court ; where, cursed court,  
No woman comes, but for his am'rous use.  
He raging to possess her, she was forc'd  
To own herself my wife. The furious king  
Started at incest : but grown desperate,  
Not daring to enjoy what he desir'd,  
In mad revenge, which I could never learn,  
He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,  
Far from my hopes ever to see her more.

*Blan.* Most barbarous of fathers ! the sad tale  
Has struck me dumb with wonder.

*Oro.* I have done.

I'll trouble you no farther : now and then  
A sigh will have its way : that shall be all.

*Enter STANMORE.*

*Stan.* Blandford, the Lieutenant Governor is gone  
to your plantation. He desires you will bring the  
Royal Slave with you. The sight of his fair mistress,



he says, is an entertainment for a prince ; he would have his opinion of her.

*Oro.* Is he a lover ?

*Blan.* So he says himself : he flatters a beautiful slave that I have, and calls her mistress.

*Oro.* Must he then flatter her to call her mistress ?  
I pity the proud man, who thinks himself  
Above being in love ; what, tho' she be a slave,  
She may deserve him.

*Blan.* You shall judge of that, when you see her,  
sir.

*Oro.* I go with you.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE II.

### *A Plantation.*

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR *following* IMOINDA.

*Gov.* I have disturb'd you, I confess my fault,  
My fair Clemene ; but begin again,  
And I will listen to your mournful song,  
Sweet as the soft complaining nightingale's.  
While every note calls out my trembling soul,  
And leaves me silent, as the midnight groves,  
Only to shelter you ;—sing, sing again,  
And let me wonder at the many ways  
You have to ravish me.

*Imo.* O, I can weep  
Enough for you and me, if that will please you.

*Gov.* You must not weep : I come to dry your  
tears,  
And raise you from your sorrow.

*Imo.* Can that be,  
When all your actions, and your looks, convince me



That you wou'd keep me here, still far from those,  
For whom the tears I shed must flow for ever?—

*Gov.* They must not sure—be all the past forgotten ;—

Look forwards now, where better prospects rise,  
New pleasures court you, and new friends invite.

*Imo.* Alas ! can I—I know not what to say—  
Nature has form'd you of a diff'rent kind,  
Or thus you cou'd not talk ; and shou'd I reason  
From what I feel, you wou'd not understand me.

*Gov.* O, yes ; my heart has all the soft sensations,  
Has all, that friendship, and that love inspires—

*Imo.* Let your heart answer for me, then :—cou'd  
you,

Forc'd to some distant land, unknown, forlorn,  
A slave, dependent on another's will,  
Cut off from all that habit has endear'd,  
Cut off from friendship, from domestic joy—  
Could you forget all these?—Alas ! they're past—

[*Bursts into tears*

*Gov.* O, fair Clemene ! there is yet a passion  
Which can obliterate all the joys and pains  
That others have impress'd ; make room for that,  
And all I wish is done—look upon me :  
Look with the eyes of kind indulging love,  
That I may have full cause for what I say :  
I come to offer you your liberty,  
And be myself the slave. You turn away.

[*Following her.*

But every thing becomes you. I may take  
This pretty hand : I know your modesty  
Would draw it back : but you will take it ill,  
If I should let it go, I know you would.  
You shall be gently forc'd to please yourself ;  
That you will thank me for.

[*She struggles and gets her hand from him, then  
he offers to kiss her.*

Nay, if you struggle with me, I must take——

*Imo.* You may my life, that I can part with freely.  
[*Exit.*]

*Enter* BLANDFORD, STANMORE, and OROONOKO.

*Blan.* So, Governor, we don't disturb you, I hope. Your mistress has left you : you were making love ; she is thankful for the honour, I suppose.

*Gov.* Quite insensible to all I say and do : When I speak to her, she sighs, or weeps, But never answers me as I would have her.

*Stan.* There's something nearer than her slavery, that touches her.

*Blan.* What do her fellow-slaves say of her ; can't they find the cause ?

*Gov.* Some of them, who pretend to be wiser than the rest, and hate her, I suppose for being used better than they are, will needs have it that she is with child.

*Blan.* Poor wretch ! if it be so, I pity her : She has lost a husband, who perhaps was dear To her, and then you cannot blame her.

*Oro.* If it be so, indeed you cannot blame her.

[*Sighing.*]

*Gov.* No, no ; it is not so : if it be so, I must still love her ; and, desiring still, I must enjoy her.

*Blan.* Try what you can do with fair means, and welcome.

*Gov.* I'll give you ten slaves for her.

*Blan.* You know she is our Lord Governor's : but if I could dispose of her, I would not now, especially to you.

*Gov.* Why not to me ?

*Blan.* I mean against her will. You are in love with her ;

And we all know what your desires would have : Love stops at nothing but possession.

Were she within your pow'r you do not know  
How soon you would be tempted to forget  
The nature of the deed, and, may be, act  
A violence, you after would repent.

*Oro.* 'Tis godlike in you to protect the weak.

*Gov.* Fie, fie, I would not force her. Though she  
be a slave, her mind is free, and should consent.

*Oro.* Such honour will engage her to consent.  
Shall we not see the wonder?

*Gov.* Have a care;

You have a heart, and she has conqu'ring eyes.

*Oro.* I have a heart : but if it could be false  
To my first vows, ever to love again,  
These honest hands should tear it from my breast,  
And throw the traitor from me. O ! Imoinda !  
Living or dead, I can be only thine.

*Blan.* Imoinda was his wife : she's either dead,  
Or living, dead to him ; forc'd from his arms  
By an inhuman father. Another time  
I'll tell you all.

[*To the GOVERNOR*

*Stan.* The slaves have done their work ;  
And now begins their evening merriment.

*Blan.* The men are all in love with fair Clemene  
As much as you, and try their little tricks  
To entertain her, and divert her sadness.  
May be she is among them : shall we see ?

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.

SLAVES, MEN, WOMEN, and CHILDREN, upon the  
Ground; some rise and dance.

*Enter the* LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, STANMORE, and  
OROONOKO, as Spectators; CAPTAIN DRIVER and  
several PLANTERS, with their Swords drawn.

*A Bell rings.*

*Capt.* Where are you, Governor? Make what haste  
you can

To save yourself and the whole colony.

I bade 'em ring the bell.

*Gov.* What is the matter?

1 *Plan.* The Indians are come down upon us .  
they have plunder'd some of the plantations already,  
and are marching this way as fast as they can.

*Gov.* What can we do against them?

*Blan.* We shall be able to make a stand, till more  
planters come in to us.

2 *Plan.* There are a great many more without, if  
you would show yourself, and put us in order.

*Gov.* There's no danger of the white slaves; they'll  
not stir. Blandford, come you along with me: some  
of you stay here to look after the black slaves.

[*All go out but the* CAPTAIN and six PLANTERS,  
who all at once seize OROONOKO.

1 *Plan.* Ay, ay, let us alone.

*Capt.* In the first place, we secure you, sir,  
As an enemy to the government.

*Oro.* Are you there, sir? You are my constant  
friend.

1 *Plan.* You will be able to do a great deal of mischief.

*Capt.* But we shall prevent you : bring the irons hither. He has the malice of a slave in him, and would be glad to be cutting his masters' throats. I know him. Chain his hands and feet, that he may not run over to them. If they have him, they shall carry him on their backs, that I can tell them.

[*As they are chaining him, BLANDFORD enters, and runs to them.*

*Blan.* What are you doing there ?

*Capt.* Securing the main chance : this is a bosom enemy.

*Blan.* Away, you brutes : I'll answer with my life for his behaviour ; so tell the Governor.

*Capt. and Plan.* Well, sir, so we will.

[*Exeunt CAPTAIN and PLANTERS.*

*Oro.* Give me a sword, and I'll deserve your trust.

*Enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR and PLANTERS*

*Blan.* Hell and the devil ! they drive away our slaves before our faces. Governor, can you stand tamely by, and suffer this : Clemene, sir, your mistress, is among them.

*Gov.* We throw ourselves away, in the attempt to rescue them.

*Oro.* A lover cannot fall more glorious,  
Than in the cause of love. He, that deserves  
His mistress' favour, will not stay behind :  
I'll lead you on, be bold, and follow me. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter IMOINDA.*

*Imo.* I'm tost about by my tempestuous fate,  
And no where must have rest ; Indians, or English !  
Whoever has me, I am still a slave  
No matter whose I am, since I'm no more  
My royal master's ; since I'm his no more.  
O, I was happy ! nay, I will be happy,



In the dear thought that I am still his wife,  
Though far divided from him.

*[Draws off to a corner of the stage,*

*After a shout, enter the* LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,  
OROONOKO, BLANDFORD, STANMORE, *and the*  
PLANTERS,

Gov. Thou glorious man! thou something greater  
sure

Than Cæsar ever was! that single arm  
Has sav'd us all: accept our general thanks.

*[All bow to OROONOKO.*

And what we can do more to recompense  
Such noble services, you shall command.  
Clemene too shall thank you——she is safe——  
Look up, and bless your brave deliverer.

*[Brings CLEMENE forward, looking down on the  
ground.*

Oro. Bless me indeed!

Blan. You start!

Oro. O, all you gods!

Who govern this great world, and bring about  
Things strange, and unexpected, can it be?

Gov. What is't you stare at so?

Oro. Answer me, some of you; you who have  
pow'r,

And have your senses free: or are you all  
Struck thro' with wonder too?

*[Looking still fixed on her.*

Plan. What would you know?

Oro. My soul steals from my body thro' my  
eyes;

All that is left of life I'll gaze away,  
And die upon the pleasure.

Gov. This is strange!

Oro. If you but mock me with her image here:  
If she be not Imoinda——

*[She looks upon him, and faints; he runs to her*



Ha ! she faints !

Nay, then it must be she ; it is Imoinda :  
My heart confesses her, and leaps for joy,  
To welcome her to her own empire here.  
I feel her all, in ev'ry part of me.

O ! let me press her in my eager arms,  
Wake her to life, and with this kindling kiss  
Give back that soul, she only lent to me. [*Kisses her*  
Imoinda ! Oh ! thy Oroonoko calls.

[*IMOINDA coming to life.*

Imo. My Oroonoko ! Oh ! I can't believe  
What any man can say. But, if I am  
To be deceiv'd, there's something in that name,  
That voice, that face—— [*Staring at him.*  
O ! if I know myself, I cannot be mistaken.

[*Runs and embraces OROONOKO*

Oro. Never here :

You cannot be mistaken : I am yours,  
Your Oroonoko, all that you would have,  
Your tender loving husband.

Imo. All indeed

That I would have : my husband ! then I am  
Alive, and waking to the joys I feel :  
They were so great, I could not think them true ;  
But I believe all that you say to me :  
For truth itself and everlasting love  
Grows in this breast, and pleasure in these arms.

Oro. Take, take me all : inquire into my heart,  
(You know the way to ev'ry secret there)  
My heart the sacred treasury of love :  
And if, in absence, I have misemploy'd  
A mite from the rich store : if I have spent  
A wish, a sigh, but what I sent to you ;  
May I be curs'd to wish, and sigh in vain,  
And you not pity me.

Imo. O ! I believe,  
And know you by myself. If these sad eyes,  
Since last we parted, have beheld the face

Of any comfort; or once wish'd to see  
The light of any other heav'n but you,  
May I be struck this moment blind, and lose  
Your blessed sight, never to find you more.

*Oro.* Imoinda! O, this separation  
Has made you dearer, if it can be so,  
Than you were ever to me. You appear  
Like a kind star to my benighted steps,  
To guide me on my way to happiness:  
I cannot miss it now. Governor, friend,  
You think me mad: but let me bless you all,  
Who any way have been the instruments  
Of finding her again. Imoinda's found!  
And every thing that I would have in her.

[*Embracing her.*

*Stan.* Where's your mistress now, Governor?

*Gov.* Why, where most men's mistresses are forced  
to be sometimes,  
With her husband, it seems! But I won't lose her so!  
[*Aside.*

*Stan.* He has fought lustily for her, and deserves  
her.

I'll say that for him

*Blan.* Sir, we congratulate your happiness: I do  
most heartily.

[*To OROONOKO.*

*Gov.* And all of us; but how comes it to pass——

*Oro.* That will require

More precious time than I can spare you now.  
I have a thousand things to ask of her,  
And she as many more to know of me.  
But you have made me happier, I confess,  
Acknowledge it, much happier, than I  
Have words, or pow'r, to tell you. Captain, you,  
Ev'n you, who most have wrong'd me, I forgive.  
I will not say you have betray'd me now:  
I'll think you but the minister of fate,  
To bring me to my lov'd Imoinda here.

*Imo.* How how shall I receive you; how be worthy

Of such endearments, all this tenderness ?  
These are the transports of prosperity,  
When fortune smiles upon us.

*Cro.* Let the fools,  
Who follow fortune, live upon her smiles.  
All our prosperity is plac'd in love,  
We have enough of that to make us happy.  
This little spot of earth, you stand upon,  
Is more to me than the extended plains  
Of my great father's kingdom. Here I reign  
In full delights, in joys to pow'r unknown ;  
Your love my empire, and your heart my throne.  
[*Exeunt*

---

## ACT THE THIRD.

### SCENE I.

#### *A Plantation.*

*Enter ABOAN, three SLAVES, and HOTMAN.*

*Hot.* What! to be slaves to cowards! slaves to rogues, who can't defend themselves!

*Abo.* Who is this man? he talks as if he were acquainted with our design: is he one of us?

[*Aside to his own gang.*

*1 Slave.* Not yet: but he will be glad to make one, I believe.

*Abo.* I think so too, and may be worth the having.

*Hot.* Go, sneak in corners; whisper out your griefs,

For fear your masters hear you : cringe and crouch  
 Under the bloody whip, like beaten curs,  
 That lick their wounds, and know no other cure.  
 All, wretches all ! you feel their cruelty,  
 As much as I can feel, but dare not groan.  
 For my part, while I have a life and tongue,  
 I'll curse the authors of my slavery.

*Abo.* Have you been long a slave ?

*Hot.* Yes, many years.

*Abo.* And do you only curse ?

*Hot.* Curse ! only curse ! I cannot conjure,  
 To raise the spirits up of other men :  
 I am but one. O ! for a soul of fire,  
 To warm, and animate our common cause,  
 And make a body of us, then I would  
 Do something more than curse.

*Abo.* That body set on foot, would you be one,  
 A limb, to lend it motion ?

*Hot.* I would be  
 The heart of it ; the head, the hand, and heart  
 Would I could see the day !

*Abo.* This spirit pleases me, and I will trust him.—  
[*Aside.*  
 The time may come to you ; be ready for it.—

*Enter BLANDFORD.*

We're interrupted now—we'll meet anon.

*Blan.* If there be any one among you here  
 That did belong to Oroonoko, speak,  
 I come to him.

*Abo.* I did belong to him. Aboan my name.

*Blan.* You are the man I want ; pray come with  
 me. [*Exit all but HOTMAN.*

*Hot.* Yes, 'tis as I suspected——this Aboan  
 Has form'd some secret project to revolt ;  
 My well-feign'd zeal has snar'd him, and he'll trust  
 me :  
 Then welcome liberty !—not that I mean

To trust his cunning, or the chance of arms ;  
I have a nearer, safer way to freedom :  
I'll learn the plot, and watch it step by step,  
Till on the verge of execution—then,  
Just then, betray it ; 'twill enhance the merit,  
And make reward more ample and more sure.

[*Exit.*]

## SCENE II.

*A Room.*

*Enter OROONOKO and IMOINDA.*

*Oro.* I do not blame my father for his love :  
'Twas Nature's fault that made you like the sun,  
The reasonable worship of mankind :  
He could not help his adoration.  
But when I think on his barbarity,  
'That could expose you to so many wrongs ;  
Driving you out to wretched slavery,  
Only for being mine ; then I confess  
I wish I could forget the name of son,  
That I might curse the tyrant.

*Imo.* I will bless him,  
For I have found you here : heav'n only knows  
What is reserv'd for us : but, if we guess  
The future by the past, our fortune must  
Be wonderful, above the common size  
Of good or ill ; it must be in extremes :  
Extremely happy, or extremely wretched.

*Oro.* 'Tis in our pow'r to make it happy now.

*Imo.* But not to keep it so.

*Enter BLANDFORD and ABOAN.*

*Blan.* My royal lord !  
I have a present for you.



Oro. Aboan !

Abo. Your lowest slave.

Oro. My try'd and valu'd friend.

This worthy man always prevents my wants :  
I only wish'd, and he has brought thee to me.  
Thou art surpris'd : carry thy duty there :

[ABOAN goes to IMOINDA, and falls at her feet.  
While I acknowledge mine, how shall I thank you ?

Blan. Believe me honest to your interest,  
And I am more than paid. I have secur'd  
That all your followers shall be gently us'd.  
This gentleman, your chief favourite, sir,  
Shall wait upon your person, while you stay  
Among us.

Oro. I owe every thing to you.

Blan. You must not think you are in slavery.

Oro. I do not find I am.

Blan. Kind heav'n has miraculously sent  
Those comforts, that may teach you to expect  
Its farther care, in your deliverance.

Oro. I sometimes think myself, heav'n is concern'd  
For my deliverance.

Blan. It will be soon ;  
You may expect it. Pray, in the mean time,  
Appear as cheerful as you can among us.  
You have some enemies, that represent  
You dangerous, and would be glad to find  
A reason, in your discontent, to fear :  
They watch your looks. But there are honest men,  
Who are your friends : you are secur'd in them.

Oro. I thank you for your caution.

Blan. I will leave you :  
And be assur'd, I wish your liberty.

[Exit BLANDFORD

Abo. He speaks you very fair.

Oro. He means me fair.

Abo. If he should not, my lord ?

Oro. If he should not ?

I'll not suspect his truth : but if I did,  
What shall I get by doubting ?

*Abo.* You secure  
Yourself from disappointment : but Besides  
There's this advantage in suspecting him :  
When you put off the hopes of other men,  
You will rely upon your god-like self :  
And then you may be sure of liberty.

*Oro.* Be sure of liberty ! what dost thou mean,  
Advising to rely upon myself ?  
I think I may be sure on't : we must wait :  
'Tis worth a little patience. [*Turning to IMOINDA*

*Abo.* O, my lord !

*Oro.* What dost thou drive at ?

*Abo.* Sir, another time  
You would have found it sooner : but I see  
Love has your heart, and takes up all your thoughts.

*Oro.* And canst thou blame me ?

*Abo.* Sir, I must not blame you.  
But, as our fortune stands, there is a passion  
(Your pardon, royal mistress, I must speak)  
'That would become you better than your love :  
A brave resentment ; which, inspir'd by you,  
Might kindle and diffuse a gen'rous rage  
Among the slaves, to rouse and shake our chains,  
And struggle to be free.

*Oro.* How can we help ourselves ?

*Abo.* I knew you, when you wou'd have found a  
way.

How help ourselves ! the very Indians teach us :  
We need but to attempt our liberty,  
And we carry it. We have hands sufficient,  
Double the number of our master's force,  
Ready to be employ'd. What hinders us  
To set them then at work ? We want but you,  
To head our enterprize, and bid us strike.

*Oro.* What would you do ?

*Abo.* Cut our oppressors' throats.

*Oro.* And you would have me join in your design  
Of murder.

*Abo.* It deserves a better name :  
But, be it what it will, 'tis justify'd  
By self-defence, and natural liberty.

*Oro.* I'll hear no more on't

*Abo.* I'm sorry for't.

*Oro.* Nor shall you think of it !

*Abo.* Not think of it !

*Oro.* No, I command you not.

*Abo.* Remember, sir,  
You are a slave yourself, and to command  
Is now another's right. Not think of it !  
Since the first moment they put on my chains,  
I've thought of nothing but the weight of them,  
And how to throw them off : can yours sit easy ?

*Oro.* I have a sense of my condition,  
As painful, and as quick, as yours can be.  
I feel for my Imoinda and myself ;  
Imoinda, much the tenderest part of me.  
But, though I languish for my liberty,  
I would not buy it at the christian price  
Of black ingratitude : they shall not say,  
That we deserv'd our fortune by our crimes.  
Murder the innocent !

*Abo.* The innocent !

*Oro.* These men are so, whom you would rise  
against.

If we are slaves, they did not make us slaves,  
But bought us in the common way of trade.  
They paid our price for us, and we are now  
Their property, a part of their estate,  
To manage as they please. Mistake me not,  
I do not tamely say, that we should bear  
All they could lay upon us : But we find  
The load so light, so little to be felt,

(Considering they have us in their pow'r,  
And may inflict what grievances they please,)  
We ought not to complain.

*Abo.* My royal lord !

You do not know the heavy grievances,  
The toils, the labours, weary drudgeries,  
Which they impose ; burdens more fit for beasts,  
For senseless beasts to bear, than thinking men.  
Then if you saw the bloody cruelties  
They execute on every slight offence ;  
Nay, sometimes in their proud, insulting sport,  
How worse than dogs they lash their fellow-crea-  
tures,

Your heart would bleed for them. O ! could you  
know

How many wretches lift their hands and eyes  
To you for their relief !

*Oro.* I pity them,  
And wish I could with honesty do more.

*Abo.* You must do more, and may, with honesty  
O, royal sir, remember who you are,  
A prince, born for the good of other men ;  
Whose godlike office is to draw the sword  
Against oppression, and set free mankind :  
And this I'm sure you think oppression now.  
What tho' you have not felt those miseries,  
Never believe you are oblig'd to them :  
They have their selfish reasons, may be, now,  
For using you so well : but there will come  
A time, when you must have your share of them.

*Oro.* You see how little cause I have to think so.  
Favour'd in my own person, in my friends ;  
Indulg'd in all that can concern my care,  
In my Imoinda's soft society. [*Embracing her*

*Abo.* And therefore would you lie contented now  
In the forgetfulness, and arms of love,  
To get young princes for them ?



*Oro.* Say'st thou ! ha !

*Abo.* Princes, the heirs of empires, and the last  
Of your illustrious lineage, to be born  
To pamper up their pride, and be their slaves ?

*Oro.* Imoinda ! save me, save me from that  
thought !

*Imo.* There is no safety from it : I have long  
Suffer'd it with a mother's labouring pains ;  
And can no longer. Kill me, kill me now,  
While I am blest, and happy in your love ;  
Rather than let me live to see you hate me :  
As you must hate me : me, the only cause,  
The fountain of these flowing miseries.

*Oro.* Shall the dear babe, the eldest of my hopes,  
Whom I begot a prince, be born a slave ?  
The treasure of this temple was design'd  
T' enrich a kingdom's fortune : shall it here  
Be seiz'd upon by vile unhallow'd hands,  
To be employ'd in uses most profane ?

*Abo.* In most unworthy uses ; think of that ;  
And, while you may, prevent it. O, my lord,  
Rely on nothing that they say to you.  
They speak you fair, I know, and bid you wait.  
But think what 'tis to wait on promises,  
And promises of men who know no tie  
Upon their words, against their interest :  
And where's their interest in freeing you ?

*Imo.* O ! where, indeed, to lose so many slaves ?

*Abo.* Nay, grant this man, you think so much  
your friend,  
Be honest, and intends all that he says ;  
He is but one ; and in a government,  
Where, he confesses, you have enemies,  
That watch your looks. What looks can you put  
on,  
To please these men, who are before resolv'd  
To read them their own way ? Alas, my lord !



If they incline to think you dangerous,  
They have their knavish arts to make you so :  
And then who knows how far their cruelty  
May carry their revenge ?

*Imo.* To every thing  
That does belong to you, your friends, and me  
I shall be torn from you, forced away  
Helpless and miserable : shall I live  
To see that day again ?

*Oro.* That day shall never come.

*Abo.* I know you are persuaded to believe  
The Governor's arrival will prevent  
These mischiefs, and bestow your liberty :  
But who is sure of that ? I rather fear  
More mischiefs from his coming. He is young,  
Luxurious, passionate, and amorous :  
Such a complexion, and made bold by power,  
To countenance all he is prone to do,  
Will know no bounds, no law against his lusts.  
If, in a fit of his intemperance,  
With a strong hand he shall resolve to seize,  
And force my royal mistress from your arms,  
How can you help yourself ?

*Oro.* Ha ! thou hast rous'd  
The lion in his den, he stalks abroad,  
And the wide forest trembles at his roar.  
I find the danger now : my spirits start  
At the alarm, and from all quarters come  
To man my heart, the citadel of love.  
Is there a power on earth to force you from me ?  
And shall I not resist it ?  
Now I am fashion'd to thy purpose : speak,  
What combination, what conspiracy,  
Would'st thou engage me in ? I'll undertake  
All thou would'st have me now for liberty,  
For the great cause of love and liberty.

*Abo.* Now, my great master, you appear yourself.

And, since we have you join'd in our design,  
It cannot fail us. I have muster'd up  
The choicest slaves, men who are sensible  
Of their condition, and seem most resolv'd :  
They have their several parties.

*Oro.* Summon them,  
Assemble them : I will come forth and show  
Myself among them : If they are resolv'd,  
I'll lead their foremost resolutions.

*Abo.* I have provided those will follow you.

*Oro.* With this reserve in our proceedings still,  
The means that lead us to our liberty  
Must not be bloody.

*Abo.* In self-defence, my lord——

*Oro.* I know, I feel,  
All thou canst say, and more—is there no way ?

[*Pauses.*]

Ye gods ! 'tis inspiration ! what a thought !  
The very ship that brought, that made us slaves,  
Swims in the river still—we'll seize on that,  
And not a life shall fall—

*Abo.* And shall we then  
Desert our honest, brave, unhappy friends !—  
Blast all their hopes——

*Oro.* O ! no, we'll go together ;  
Not one associate shall be left behind

*Abo.* Why, farewell then revenge ——it shall be  
so.—

We shall expect you, sir——

*Oro.* You shall not long.

[*Reunt* OROONOKO, IMOINDA, and  
ABOAN.

## SCENE III.

*A Plantation.*

*Enter several SLAVES, Conspirators.*

1 *Slav.* 'Tis about the time now, he'll be here soon.

2 *Slav.* Well, but what are we to do ?

1 *Slav.* To do ! why we are to be free.

2 *Slav.* Ay ! 'twas lucky this Aboan came among us ; when I look at him, and hear him talk, I think I'm free already.

3 *Slav.* Why, ay, to be sure ; such men as he may do much.

2 *Slav.* Why, we were all such men, 'till slavery broke us.

But what is the project ?

3 *Slav.* Why, we shall hear, we shall near.

1 *Slav.* Ay, let Aboan alone ; I'll warrant he'll put us in a way.

2 *Slav.* There's Hotman too ; did you hear how he fir'd when our tyrants ran away, and left us to the Indians.

1 *Slav.* Did I ? ay—Hotman, in my opinion, has as much spirit as Aboan—here they are, coming together ; let us draw back a little : See how earnestly they talk ; don't let us interrupt them.

*[They retire to the back of the Stage.]*

*Enter HOTMAN and AEOAN.*

*Abo.* This is his scheme ; I left him but this moment.

*Hot.* I like it not ; a glorious feat indeed,  
For souls of fire, provok'd by burning wrongs,  
To seize a ship by night and steal away.  
Our useless weapons slumbering in the sheath.  
Confusion ! and our suff'rings unreveng'd !

*Abo.* Indeed I thought of more; but is not freedom,  
Without the chance of contest, worth acceptance?

*Hot.* I know not—to those frigid clods, perhaps;  
To our pale lords, who only dare to strike  
Whom others bind, it might—but not to me—  
By all my wrongs, I thirst for more than freedom.

*Abo.* Thy noble ardour might e'en warm the dead  
We'll try once more its pow'r on Oroonoko——  
But soft, here are our friends, and, as I think,  
At distance comes the Prince—it must be he——  
Welcome, my friends, the Prince is of your party,  
[Turning to the SLAVES.

And has engaged to make your cause his own—  
See where he comes——

*Enter OROONOKO.*

Here are our friends, my lord,  
Who ask but your concurrence to be free.

*Oro.* If to all these I am the means of freedom,  
'Tis well I was a slave—'tis well that here  
I've learnt the wrongs you suffer.

*Hot.* 'Tis better not to be, than thus to suffer.

*Abo.* To die at once, than leave our wretched  
offspring

Heirs of the chains and scourges that——

*Oro.* No more——

My friend here tells me, you have well resolv'd

[To the SLAVES.

To make one glorious effort to be free;  
To risk your lives, and all the threefold woes  
That would attend our unsuccessful contest.

[The SLAVES look on each other, and answer  
nothing.

*Hot.* [Clamorously.] All, all we risk for freedom—  
and revenge!

[OROONOKO turns quick, and looks earnestly  
at HOTMAN.

Oro. [*After a pause.*] 'Tis well! 'tis great! [*Turning to the rest.*] But I have found the means  
To gain our purpose by a safer way——

Hot. [*Interrupting.*] A safer!—let him talk of  
safer ways

Who holds his life more dear than great revenge.

[OROONOKO turns hastily again, and looks at  
HOTMAN; fixing his eyes some time upon  
him without speaking;—HOTMAN at length  
shows some signs of confusion: OROONOKO  
then turns and speaks to ABOAN.]

Oro. Is this the man whose zeal you prais'd so  
much?

Abo. It is——

Hot. [*More confused.*] They whisper; yes, I am  
suspected;

I must talk louder still——

[*Aside.*

Oro. [*Still eyeing HOTMAN.*] And is he trusted  
with the whole design?

Abo. He is, my lord.

Oro. The marks of guilt are on him.

Abo. Not so, my lord——

Oro. Whence his confusion, then, to meet my  
eye;

Abo. Whence his confusion, now, suppose him  
false?

Oro. Whence! from the consciousness of false-  
hood here,

That which makes villains start at their own sha-  
dow,

That made him fear my eye, though it could reach  
No farther than the covering of his heart——

Ev'n now he trembles, and a sickly hue  
Steals on his cheeks——

Abo. It does—yet try him farther.

Oro. To try him, now he's trusted, boots us no-  
thing



*Abo.* Do it, if only to restore our hope,  
Or end the torments of suspense——

*Oro.* I will.——

Your zeal, my friend, I honour; but you know——  
[To HOTMAN.

*Hot.* That nobler hopes have set my soul on  
fire

Than just to steal a ship, and run away——  
If I consent to this, ye gods!——

[*He affects to speak this loud, but his voice  
falters through his fear.*

*Oro.* If you do not consent, you will not sure——

*Hot.* I will not what!—Who is there that suspects  
me? [In a great confusion.

[OROONOKO looks at ABOAN, then turns again to  
HOTMAN.

*Oro.* Suspects, my friend! Of what should we  
suspect you?

*Abo.* [*Hastily.*] By heaven's—if I suspected any  
present

Of a perfidious view to blast our hopes,  
This dagger here at once should make him faithful.

[HOTMAN, starting, attempts to speak, but  
is overcome by his confusion and terror.

*Oro.* [To ABOAN.] What think you now?

*Abo.* By all my fears, a coward and a traitor.

*Oro.* He'll certainly betray us.

*Abo.* That he shall not:

For what I swore I'll do——

*Oro.* What wilt thou do?

*Abo.* I'll stop his mouth before you; stab him here,  
And then let him inform.

[Going to stab HOTMAN, OROONOKO holds  
him; HOTMAN, who keeps his eye upon  
them, perceives it with extreme confusion,  
and after some irresolute gestures, steals  
off unperceived.

Oro. Thou art not mad——

Abo. I wou'd secure ourselves,

Oro. It shall not be this way, —it cannot be ;  
To murder him, is to alarm the rest.

[*Turns about and misses* HOTMAN.

What, is he gone ?

Abo. [*To the SLAVES.*] Is Hotman gone ?——

1 *Slave*. Hotman, my lord, is gone ; but doubt  
him not, [*To OROONOKO.*

The stern inquiring look of majesty,  
(We feel its pow'r) will strike the mind with awe :  
He dar'd to differ, sir : But, when oppos'd,  
He felt confus'd, the difference of his state——

Oro. Why, be it so——

My fellow-sufferers and worthy friends,  
To-morrow, early as the breaking day,  
We rendezvous behind the citron-grove ;—  
'Till then, farewell——  
Aboan !

[*Exeunt SLAVES*

Abo. My lord.

Oro. 'Twas better not to trust them with our fears,  
Yet let them meet at a more early time ;  
Within this hour—and then, though Hotman's false,  
We may succeed before we are betray'd——

Abo. We may——I'll after them and do it.

[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT THE FOURTH

## SCENE I.

*The GOVERNOR'S House.*

*Enter the* LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR *and* HOTMAN .

*Gov.* To seize the ship, say you ?

*Hot.* Ev'n so, my lord.

*Gov.* At what hour ?

*Hot.* The hour I cannot tell.

*Gov.* Was you not trusted then ?

*Hot.* I was, my lord ; but he they call the Prince—

*Gov.* What, Oroonoko ?

*Hot.* The same, my lord ; a bloody-minded fellow ;—

He and another took it in their heads

To think I was not quite the rogue I seem'd,

And if I had not left them, wou'd have stabb'd me.

*Gov.* Indeed——Well, we must be before-hand with them——

Your honest service to the government

Shall be rewarded with your liberty.

Let's see——

[*Pauses.*]

*Ho.* [*Aside.*] Cou'd I have work'd them up to further mischief

My wages had been more.

[*Retiring*]

*Gov.* Here, Hotman—harkye,

Let Captain Driver come to me this moment——

[*Exit* HOTMAN

Why this is just the thing I wou'd have wish'd.

The laws now take this Oroonoko off,

And leave Imoinda mine—the ship secur'd,

His party will desert him, and with ease

I then may seize my prey.

*Enter* CAPTAIN DRIVER.

Captain, what hands have you on board to-night?

*Captain.* Not many; but enough to do the business.

I learnt it from the slave I met below.

*Gov.* I sent him, sir,——

*Capt.* I know it, Governor; and I have sent him with orders that the ship shou'd weigh, and stand from shore; 'tis doing, sir, ere now.

*Gov.* Your crew then, Captain, are not all on board?

*Capt.* No, no; I'll send them orders to be ready; They'll do for your Prince Oroonoko yet.

*Gov.* Well, Captain, I'll expect you; I shall order All the militia under arms directly, Here on the platform.

*Capt.* You need not fear me. [*Exeunt severally*

SCENE II.

*The Citron Grove.—Moonlight.*

*Enter* OROONOKO, ABOAN, IMOINDA; SLAVES,  
WOMEN and CHILDREN following.

*Oro.* Come on, my friends! see, where the rising  
moon

Now shines upon our purpose ! Let our march  
 At once be swift and silent like her course ;  
 The ship surpris'd, we triumph without conflict,  
 Nor mark our way to liberty with blood.

[*As OROONOKO is leading them out,*

*Enter a SLAVE.*

1 *Slav.* [*Prostrating himself before OROONOKO.*]  
 My lord, my prince——

*Oro.* What would'st thou say ? be brief.

1 *Slav.* The villain Hotman——

*Abo.* Ah !——

*Oro.* Well, what of him ?——take courage——what  
 of him ?

1 *Slav.* My lord, I fear he has betray'd us.

*Oro.* Why ?

1 *Slav.* From our last rendezvous, my lord, e'en  
 now

I watch'd him to the Governor's ; but there  
 He stay'd not long ; I saw, as he came out,  
 He spoke to Captain Driver, and from him,  
 I watch'd him still ; he hasted to the ship,  
 Which, now unmoor'd, lies farther from the shore ;  
 The Captain and his crew are up in arms ;  
 All the militia out, the place alarm'd ;  
 They'll soon be here——

*Oro.* Why, we must meet them then ; the iron hand  
 Of stern necessity is now upon us ;  
 And from the rack she drives us to our swords.

[*Draws.*

The women and the children fall behind,  
 Unfit for dangers, such as now approach us,  
 What will become of them !

[*ABOAN, who, during this scene, expresses the  
 utmost anguish of mind, by his gestures and  
 deportment, at length comes forward, and  
 prostrating himself before OROONOKO, takes  
 his foot and sets it upon his head.*



Oro. Forbear—we're born to error ;—let me raise thee——

I know thee faithful, therefore blame thee not.

Abo. O, my dear lord ! my heart drops blood to think

My hasty eager fond credulity

Should let that slave's false seeming, thus undo us—

Oro. Name it no more——

Abo. 'Tis lost—'tis ruin'd—and by me !—but this—

[*He suddenly draws a dagger, and offers to stab himself; but OROONOKO lays hold of his hand.*]

Oro. Hold!—now you wrong my design : Thus far

Thou'st only err'd ;—but to desert me now

[*Wresting the dagger from him.*]

Wou'd be a crime indeed—I need thy help.

[*Turning to IMOINDA.*]

Imoinda, you must not expose yourself?

Retire, my love; I almost fear for you.

Imo. I fear no danger :—Life, or death, I will  
Enjoy with you.

1 Slav. [*Alarmed.*] They come, they come—I see them ; they're upon us.

Oro. [*Putting himself before IMOINDA.*] My person is your guard.

*Enter the* LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, *with* HOTMAN *and his* RABBLE ; *CAPTAIN* STANMORE *and his* MEN.

Abo. There is the villain that betray'd our cause ,  
His life is due to me. [*Avancing.*]

Oro. Hold, you ;—and you who come against us,  
hold !

I charge you in the general good to all,  
And wish I could command you, to prevent  
The bloody havoc of the murd'ring sword—

I would not urge destruction uncompell'd ;  
But, if you follow fate, you find it here.  
Who first advances——

*Enter the CAPTAIN with his CREW.*

*Capt.* Here, here, here they are, Governor :—  
What, seize upon my ship !  
Come, boys, fall on——

*[Advancing first, OROONOKO kills him]*

*Oro.* Thou art fall'n indeed ;  
Thy own blood be upon thee !

*Gov.* Rest it there.  
He did deserve his death. Take him away.—

*[The body removed.]*

You see, sir, you, and those mistaken men,  
Must be our witnesses, we do not come  
As enemies, and thirsting for your blood  
If we desir'd your ruin, the revenge  
Of our companion's death, had push'd it on.  
But that we overlook, in a regard  
To common safety, and the public good.

*Oro.* Regard that public good :—Draw off your  
men,

And leave us to our fortune :—We're resolv'd.

*Gov.* Resolv'd ! on what ? your resolutions  
Are broken, overturn'd, prevented, lost :  
What fortune now can you raise out of them ?  
Nay, grant we should draw off, what can you do ?  
Where can you move ? What more can you resolve ?  
Unless it be to throw yourselves away.  
Famine must eat you up, if you go on.  
You see our numbers could with ease compel  
What we request : —And what do we request ?  
Only to save yourselves.

*[The WOMEN, with their CHILDREN, gathering  
about the MEN.]*

Oro. I'll hear no more.

Gov. To those poor wretches who have been seduc'd

And led away, to all, and ev'ry one,

We offer a full pardon——

Oro. Then fall on. *[Preparing to engage.]*

Gov. Lay hold upon't, before it be too late ;  
Pardon and mercy.

*[The MEN leave OROONOKO, and fall upon their  
Faces, crying out for pardon.]*

Slaves. Pardon—mercy—pardon !

Oro. Let them go all. Now, Governor, I see,  
I own, the folly of my enterprise,  
The rashness of this action ; and must blush,  
Quite through this veil of night, a whitely shame,  
To think I could design to make those free,  
Who were by nature slaves ; wretches, design'd  
To be their master's dogs, and lick their feet.  
We were too few before for victory.  
We're still enow to die.

*[To IMOINDA, ABOAN, and his FRIENDS.]*

*Enter BLANDFORD.*

Gov. Live, royal sir ;  
Live, and be happy long, on your own terms ;  
Only consent to yield, and you shall have  
What terms you can propose, for you, and yours.

Oro. Consent to yield ? Shall I betray myself ?

Blan. I'm glad you have proceeded by fair means ;  
*[To the GOVERNOR.]*

I came to be a mediator.

Gov. Try what you can work upon him.

Oro. Are you come against me too ?

Blan. Is this to come against you ?

*[Offering his sword to OROONOKO.]*

Unarm'd to put myself into your hands ?

I come, I hope, to serve you.

*Oro.* You have serv'd me ;  
 I thank you for't : and I am pleas'd to think  
 You were my friend, while I had need of one :  
 But now 'tis past :—this farewell, and begone.

[*Embraces him*

*Blan.* It is not past, and I must serve you still.  
 I would make up these breaches, which the sword  
 Will widen more, and elose us all in love.

*Oro.* I know what I have done, and I should be  
 A child to think they ever can forgive.  
 Forgive ! Were there but that, I would not live  
 To be forgiven :—Is there a power on earth  
 That I can ever need forgiveness from ?

*Blan.* You shall not need it.

*Oro.* No, I will not need it.

*Blan.* You see, he offers you your own conditions  
 For you and yours.

*Oro.* Must I capitulate ?  
 Precariously compound, on stinted terms,  
 To save my life ?

*Blan.* Sir, he imposes none.  
 You make them for your own security.  
 If your great heart cannot descend to treat,  
 In adverse fortune, with an enemy,  
 Yet sure your honour's safe, you may accept  
 Offers of peace and safety from a friend ?

*Gov.* He will rely on what you say to him .

[*To BLANDFORD.*

Offer him what you can, I will confirm  
 And make all good : Be you my pledge of trust.

*Blan.* I'll answer with my life for all he says.

*Gov.* Ay, do, and pay the forfeit if you please.

[*Aside.*

*Blan.* Consider, sir, can you consent to throw  
 That blessing from you, you so hardly found,

[*Of IMOINDA.*

And so much valued once.

Oro. Imoinda ! oh !

'Tis she that holds me on this argument  
Of tedious life : I could resolve it soon,  
Were this curs'd being only in debate.  
But my Imoinda struggles in my soul :  
She makes a coward of me I confess :  
I am afraid to part with her in death ;  
And more afraid of life to lose her here.

Blan. This way you must lose her ; think upon  
The weakness of her sex, made yet more weak  
With her condition, requiring rest,  
And soft indulging ease, to nurse your hopes,  
And make you a glad father.

Oro. There I feel  
A father's fondness, and a husband's love.  
They seize upon my heart, strain all its strings  
To pull me to them from my stern resolve.  
Husband and father ! all the melting art  
Of eloquence lives in those soft'ning names.  
Methinks I see the babe, with infant hands,  
Pleading for life, and begging to be born :  
Shall I forbid his birth ? Deny him light ?  
The heavenly comforts of all cheering light ?  
These are the calls of nature that call loud ;  
They will be heard, and conquer in their cause :  
He must not be a man who can resist them.  
No, my Imoinda ! I will venture all  
To save thee and that little innocent ;  
The world may be a better friend to him  
Than I have found it. Now I yield myself :

[Gives up his sword.

The conflict's past, and we are in your hands.

[Several MEN get about OROONOKO and ABOAN,  
and seize them.

Gov. So you shall find you are.——Dispose of  
them

As I commanded you.

Blan. Good heav'n forbid ! you cannot mean—



Gov. This is not your concern.

[To BLANDFOED, who goes hastily to STANMORE

Blan. For heav'n's sake use your int'rest with him,  
Stanmore.

Gov. I must take care of you. [To IMOINDA

Imo. I'm at the end

Of all my care : Here will I die with him.

[Holding OROONOKO.

Cro. You shall not force her from me. [He holds her.

Gov. Then I must [They force her from him.

Try other means, and conquer force by force :  
Break, cut off his hold, bring her away.

Stan. Dear Governor consider what you do.

Gov. Away——

Imo. I do not ask to live, kill me but here.

Oro. O bloody dogs ! Inhuman murderers !

[IMOINDA forc'd out of one door by the GOVERNOR and others. OROONOKO and ABOAN,  
out of another. [Exeunt

## ACT THE FIFTH.

### SCENE 1.

#### GOVERNOR'S House.

Enter the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, with BLANDFORD and STANMORE.

Blan. Have you no reverence of future fame ?  
No awe upon your actions from the tongues,

The censuring tongues of men that will be free?  
If you confess humanity, believe  
There is a God to punish or reward  
Our doings here: Do not provoke your fate.

*Gov.* Tell me no more of fame, and breach of  
faith,

The public good requires that he should die.

*Stan.* The public good must totter when the  
base

Is fraud, and craft, and prostituted honour.

*Blan.* When guilt is sanctified by bold pretences  
That wrong is in its consequences right,  
The bond that holds society together  
Is broken! Rule and order at an end,  
And anarchy must desolate the world.

*Gov.* The planters hold not these opinions, sir;  
They think it well that bloodshed was prevented  
By any means, and now are clamorous  
To have this slave cut off——

*Blan.* We are not sure so wretched to have these  
The rabble, judge for us: The changing crowd,  
The arbitrary guard of fortune's power,  
Who wait to catch the sentence of her frowns,  
And hurry all to ruin she condemns.

*Stan.* So far from farther wrongs, that 'tis  
shame

He should be where he is. Good Governor  
Order his liberty: He yielded up  
Himself, his all.

*Blan.* He yielded on your word;  
And I am made the cautionary pledge,  
The gage and hostage of your keeping it.  
Remember, sir, he yielded on your word;  
Your word! Which honest men will think should  
be

The last resort of truth and trust on earth.  
You cannot sure persist in such an act,  
And be sedately cruel and perfidious——

*Stan.* Besides, the wretch has now no longer pow'r  
of doing harm, were he dispos'd to use it.

*Blan.* But he is not dispos'd.

*Stan.* We'll be his sureties, sir.

*Blan.* Yes, we will answer for him now, my  
friend, the Governor, I know, will thank us

*Gov.* Well, you will have it so, do what you  
please ; just what you will with him, I give you  
leave. [Exit.

*Blan.* We thank you, sir ; this way, pray come  
with me. [Exeunt

## SCENE II.

*OROONOKO discovered upon his Back, his Legs and  
Arms stretched out, and chained to the Ground.*

*Enter BLANDFORD, STANMORE, &c.*

*Blan.* O miserable sight ! help every one,  
Assist me all to free him from his chains.

*[They help him up, and bring him forward,  
looking down.*

Most injured prince ! how shall we clear ourselves ?

*Stan.* We are not guilty of your injuries,  
No way consenting to them ; but abhor,  
Abominate, and loath this cruelty.

*Oro.* If you would have me think you are not all  
Confederates, all accessory to  
The base injustice of your Governor ;  
If you would have me live, as you appear  
Concern'd for me, if you would have me live  
To thank and bless you, there is yet a way  
To tie me ever to your honest love :

Bring my Imoinda to me ; give me her,  
To charm my sorrows, and, if possible,  
I'll sit down with my wrongs ; never to rise  
Against my fate, or think of vengeance more.

*Blan.* Be satisfy'd, you may depend upon us ;  
We'll bring her safe to you, and suddenly.

In the mean time

Endeavour to forget, sir, and forgive ;

And hope a better fortune,

[*Exeunt* BLANDFORD, STANMORE, &c

*Oro.* Forget ! forgive ! I must indeed forget  
When I forgive : But while I am a man  
In flesh, that bears the living marks of shame,  
The print of his dishonourable chains,  
I never can forgive this Governor,  
This villain ;  
What shall I do ? If I declare myself,  
I know him, he will sneak behind his guard  
Of followers, and brave me in his fears  
Else, lion-like, with my devouring rage  
I would rush on him, fasten on his throat,  
Tear a wide passage to his treacherous heart,  
And that way lay him open to the world. [*Pausing.*  
If I should turn his christian arts on him,  
Promise him, speak him fair, flatter, and creep  
With fawning steps, to get within his faith,  
I could betray him then, as he has me.  
But am I sure by that to right myself ?  
Lying's a certain mark of cowardice :  
And when the tongue forgets its honesty,  
The heart and hand may drop their functions too.  
And nothing worthy be resolv'd or done.  
Honour should be concern'd in honour's cause,  
Let me but find out  
An honest remedy, I have the hand,  
A ministering hand, that will apply it home. [*Erit.*

## SCENE III.

*The GOVERNOR'S House.*

*Enter the* LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, BLANDFORD, *and*  
STANMORE.

*Gov.* [*Impatiently.*] Well, what's the matter now ?

*Blan.* I'm sorry we intrude, sir ; but our bus'ness  
Will quickly be dispatch'd : We come to seek  
Clemene, sir ; we've promis'd Oroonoko  
To bring her to him.

*Gov.* You do very well ; 'tis kindly done of you :  
Ev'n carry her to him with all my heart.

*Stan.* You must tell us where she is.

*Gov.* I tell you ! why, don't you know ?

*Blan.* Your servant says she's in the house.

*Gov.* No, no ; I brought her home at first, indeed ;  
but I thought it would not look well to keep her  
here ; I remov'd her in the hurry only to take care  
of her. What ! she belongs to you : I have nothing  
to do with her !

*Stan.* But where is she now, sir ?

*Gov.* Why, faith, I can't say certainly : you'll hear  
of her at Parham House, I suppose : there, or there-  
abouts ; I think I sent her there.

*Blan.* I'll have an eye on him. [*Aside.*

[*Exeunt all but the* GOVERNOR.

*Gov.* I have ly'd myself into a little time,  
And must employ it : they'll be here again ;  
But I must be before them.

[*Going out, he meets* IMOINDA, *and seizes her.*  
Are you come ?  
I'll court no longer for a happiness



That is in my own keeping : You may still  
Refuse to grant so I have power to take.  
The man that asks deserves to be deny'd.

*Enter BLANDFORD behind him.*

*Imo.* He does indeed, that asks unworthily

*Blan.* You hear her, sir ; that asks unworthily.

*Gov.* You are no judge.

*Blan.* I am of my own slave.

*Gov.* Be gone, and leave us.

*Blan.* When you let her go.

*Gov.* To fasten upon you.

*Imo.* Help ! murder ! help !

*Gov.* She shall not 'scape me so. I've gone too  
far,

Not to go far farther. Curse on my delay ;  
But yet she is, and shall be in my power.

*Blan.* Nay, then it is the war of honesty ;  
I know you, and will save you from yourself.

*[Exeunt]*

#### SCENE IV.

*Enter OROONOKO.*

*Gov.* To honour bound ! and yet a slave to love  
I am distracted by their rival powers,  
And both will be obey'd. O, great revenge !  
Thou raiser and restorer of fall'n fame !  
Let me not be unworthy of thy aid,  
For stopping in thy course : I still am thine ;  
But can't forget I am Imoinda's too.  
She calls me from my wrongs to rescue her  
No man condemn me who has never felt

A woman's power, or try'd the force of love :  
Love, love will be  
My first ambition, and my fame the next.

*Enter ABOAN, bloody.*

Aboan !

My ever faithful friend !

*Abo.* I have no name  
That can distinguish me from the vile earth,  
To which I am going : A poor abject worm,  
That crawl'd awhile upon the bustling world,  
And now am trampled to my dust again.

*Oro.* I see thee gash'd and mangled.

*Abo.* Spare my shame *[He lies down.]*  
To tell how they have us'd me : But believe  
The hangman's hand would have been merciful.  
Do not you scorn me, sir, to think I can  
Intend to live under this infamy.  
I do not come for pity, but for pardon.

*Oro.* For pardon ! wound me not with keener  
anguish  
Than yet I feel, by thinking thou can'st need it :  
Thou'st spent an honourable life with me ;  
The earliest servant of my rising fame.

*[Stooping and embracing him]*  
*Abo.* And would attend it with my latest care :  
My life was yours, and so shall be my death,  
You must not live ; alas ! you must not live——  
Bending and sinking I have dragg'd my steps  
Thus far, to tell you that you cannot live :  
To warn you of those ignominious wrongs,  
Whips, rods, and all the instruments of death,  
Which I have felt, and are prepar'd for you.  
This was the duty that I had to pay.  
'Tis done, and now I beg to be discharg'd.

*Oro.* What shall I do for thee ?

*Abo.* My body tires,

And will not bear me off to liberty :  
I shall again be taken, made a slave.  
A sword, a dagger yet would rescue me.  
I have not strength to go to find out death ;  
You must direct him to me.

Oro. Here he is, [Gives him a dagger.]  
The only present I can make thee now :  
And, next the honourable means of life,  
I would bestow the honest means of death.

Abo. I cannot stay to thank you. Only this,  
The villain Hotman, as I stagger'd hither,  
Arm'd with a sword, I met : I wrench'd it from  
him,

Collecting all my strength ; and in his heart,  
Stain'd to the hilt, I left it.

O, my dear honour'd master, if there is  
A being after this, I shall be yours  
In the next world ; your faithful slave again.

This is to try. [Stabs himself.]

I will not say, farewell ;

For you must follow me. [Dies.]

Oro. In life and death,  
The guardian of my honour ! Follow thee !  
I should have gone before thee : then perhaps  
Thy fate had been prevented.

Why, why, you gods ! why am I so accurs'd,  
That it must be a reason of your wrath ;

A guilt, a crime sufficient to the fate

Of any one, but to belong to me ?

My friend has found it, and my wife will soon :

My wife ! the very fear's too much for life :

I can't support it. Where ? Imoinda ! Oh !

[Going out, she meets him, running into his  
arms.]

Thou bosom softness ! down of all my cares !  
Thou art disorder'd, pale, and out of breath !

If fate pursues thee, find a shelter here.

What is it thou would tell me ?

*Imo.* 'Tis in vain to call him villain.

*Oro.* Call him Governor : is it not so ?

*Imo.* There's not another sure so great.

*Oro.* Villain's the common name of mankind  
here,

But his most properly. What ! what of him ?

I fear to be resolv'd, and must inquire.

He had thee in his power ?

*Imo.* I blush to think it.

*Oro.* Blush ! to think what ?

*Imo.* That I was in his power.

*Oro.* He could not use it ?

*Imo.* What can't such men do ?

*Oro.* But did he, durst he ?

*Imo.* What he cou'd he dar'd.

*Oro.* His own gods damn him then ! for ours have  
none,

No punishment for such unheard of crime.

*Imo.* This monster, cunning in his flatteries,  
When he had weary'd all his useless arts,  
Leap'd out, fierce as a beast of prey, to seize me.  
I trembled, fear'd.

*Oro.* I fear, and tremble now.

What cou'd preserve thee ? what deliver thee ?

*Imo.* That worthy man, you us'd to call your  
friend.

*Oro.* Blandford.

*Imo.* Came in, and sav'd me from his rage.

*Oro.* He was a friend, indeed, to rescue thee !

And, for his sake, I'll think it possible

A christian may be yet an honest man.

*Imo.* O, did you know what I have struggled  
through,

To save me yours, sure you would promise me

Never to see me forc'd from you again.

Oro. To promise thee! O! do I need to promise  
But there is now no farther use of words.  
Death is security for all our fears.

[Shows ABOAN'S body on the floor.]

Imo. Aboan!

Oro. Mangled and torn, resolv'd to give me time  
To fit myself for what I must expect,  
Groan'd out a warning to me, and expir'd.

Imo. For what you must expect?

Oro. Would that were all!

Imo. What! to be butcher'd thus——

Oro. Just as thou seest.

Imo. By barb'rous hands, to fall at last their prey!

Oro. I have run the race with honour, shall I  
now

Lag, and be overtaken at the goal?

Imo. No.

Oro. I must look back to thee.

[Tenderly.]

Imo. You shall not need.

I'm always present to your purpose; say,  
Which way you would dispose me?

Oro. Have a care.

Thou'rt on a precipice, and dost not see  
Whither that question leads thee.

I cannot, as I would, dispose of thee;  
And, as I ought, I dare not. Oh, Imoinda!

Imo. Alas! that sigh! Why do you tremble so?  
Nay, then 'tis bad indeed, if you can weep.

Oro. My heart runs over, if my gushing eyes  
Betray a weakness which they never knew,  
Believe, thou only, thou could'st cause these tears:  
The gods themselves conspire with faithless men  
To our destruction.

Imo. Heav'n and earth our foes!  
If heav'n could be appeas'd, these cruel men  
Are not to be entreated or believ'd;  
O! think on that, and be no more deceiv'd.



*Oro.* But we were born to suffer.

*Imo.* Suffer both,  
Both die, and so prevent them.

*Oro.* By thy death !

O ! let me hunt my travell'd thoughts again ;  
Range the wide waste of desolate despair ;  
Start any hope. Alas ! I lose myself,  
'Tis pathless, dark, and barren, all to me.  
Thou art my only guide, my light of life,  
And thou art leaving me : send out thy beams  
Upon the wing ; let them fly all around,  
Discover every way : is there a dawn,  
A glimmering of comfort ? The great god,  
That rises on the world, must shine on us.

*Imo.* And see us set before him.

*Oro.* Thou bespeak'st,  
And goest before me.

*Imo.* So I would in love,  
In the dear unsuspected part of life,  
In death for love. Alas ! what hopes for me ?  
I was preserv'd but to acquit myself,  
To beg to die with you.

*Oro.* Which is the way ?

*Imo.* The god of Love is blind, and cannot find it.  
But quick, make haste, our enemies have eyes,  
To find us out, and show us the worst way  
Of parting : think on them.

*Oro.* Why dost thou wake me ?

*Imo.* O ! no more of love.  
For, if I listen to you, I shall quite  
Forget my dangers, and desire to live.  
I can't live yours. [Takes up the dagger.]

*Oro.* There all the stings of death  
Are shot into my heart—what shall I do ?

*Imo.* This dagger will instruct you. [Gives it him]

*Oro.* Ha ! this dagger,  
Like fate, appoints me to the horrid deed.

*Imo.* Strike, strike it home, and bravely save us both.

'There is no other safety.

*Oro.* It must be——

But first a dying kiss——

[*Kisses her.*

This last embrace——

[*Embraces her.*

And now——

*Imo.* I'm ready.

*Oro.* O! where shall I strike?

Is there the smallest grain of that lov'd body,  
That is not dearer to me than my eyes,  
My bosom'd heart, and all the life-blood there?  
Bid me cut off these limbs, hew off these hands,  
Dig out these eyes, tho' I would keep them last  
To gaze upon thee: but to murder thee!  
The joy, and charm of every ravish'd sense,  
My wife! forbid it, Nature.

*Imo.* 'Tis your wife,  
Who on her knees conjures you. O! in time  
Prevent those mischiefs that are falling on us.  
You may be hurry'd to a shameful death,  
And I too dragg'd to the vile Governor;  
Then I may cry aloud: when you are gone,  
Where shall I find a friend again to save me?

*Oro.* It will be so. Thou unexampled virtue!  
Thy resolution has recover'd mine:  
And now prepare thee.

*Imo.* Thus, with open arms,  
I welcome you, and death.

[*He drops his dagger as he looks on her, and  
throws himself on the ground.*

*Oro.* I cannot bear it.

O, let me dash against the rock of fate,  
Dig up this earth, tear, tear her bowels out,  
To make a grave, deep as the centre down,  
To swallow wide, and bury us together.  
It will not be. O! then some pitying god

(If there be one a friend to innocence)  
Find yet a way to lay her beauties down  
Gently in death, and save me from her blood

*Imo.* O, rise; 'tis more than death to see you  
thus.

I'll ease your love, and do the deed myself——

*[She takes up the dagger; he rises in haste,  
to take it from her.]*

*Oro.* O! hold; I charge thee, hold.

*Imo.* Tho', I must own,

It would be nobler for us both from you.

*Oro.* O! for a whirlwind's wing to hurry us  
To yonder cliff, which frowns upon the flood:  
That in embraces lock'd, we might plunge in,  
And perish thus in one another's arms.

*Imo.* Alas! what is that I hear?

*Oro.* I see them coming.

They shall not overtake us. This last kiss,  
And now farewell.

*Imo.* Farewell; farewell for ever.

*Oro.* I'll turn my face away, and do it so.  
Now, are you ready?

*Imo.* Now. But do not grudge me  
The pleasure in my death of a last look;  
Pray, look upon me——Now I'm satisfied.

*Oro.* So fate must be by this.

*[Going to stab her, he stops short; she lays  
her hand on his, in order to give the  
blow.]*

*Imo.* Nay, then I must assist you.  
Thus, thus 'tis finish'd, and I bless my fate,  
That, where I liv'd, I die in these lov'd arms. *[Dies.]*

*Oro.* She's gone. And now all's at an end with  
me,  
Soft, lay her down; O, we will part no more.  
*[Throws himself by her.]*

But let me pay the tribute of my grief,  
A few sad tears to thy lov'd memory,  
And then I follow—— [*Weeps over her.*  
But I stay too long. [*A noise again.*  
The noise comes nearer. Hold ; before I go,  
There's something would be done. It shall be so,  
And then, Imoinda, I'll come all to thee. [*Rises*

*Enter BLANDFORD and his Party, before the GOVERNOR and his Party; Swords drawn on both Sides.*

*Gov.* You strive in vain to save him ; he shall die.

*Blan.* Not while we can defend him with our  
lives.

*Gov.* Where is he ?

*Oro.* Here's the wretch, whom you would have.  
Put up your swords, and let not civil broils  
Engage you in the cursed cause of one,  
Who cannot live, and now entreats to die.  
This object will convince you.

*Blan.* 'Tis his wife ! [*They gather about the body.*  
Alas ! there was no other remedy.

*Gov.* Who did the bloody deed !

*Oro.* The deed was mine :  
Bloody I know it is, and I expect  
Your laws should tell me so. Thus, self-condemn'd,  
I do resign myself into your hands,  
The hands of justice——But I hold the sword—  
For you——and for myself.

[*Stabs the GOVERNOR and himself, then  
throws himself by IMOINDA'S body.*

*Oro.* 'Tis as it should be now ; I have sent his  
ghost

To be a witness of that happiness  
In the next world, which he deny'd us here. [*Dies.*

*Blan.* I hope there is a place of happiness  
In the next world for such exalted virtue.

Pagan or unbeliever, yet he liv'd  
To all he knew : and, if he went astray,  
There's mercy still above to set him right.  
But christians, guided by the heavenly ray,  
Have no excuse if they mistake their way.

*[Exeunt*

THE END.





